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Return and Reintegration Assistance External Evaluation

Country Study Nigeria

Final Report June 2013

Contracting Authority

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I read lots of African books …. I did not see myself as an African to begin with. I took sides with the white men against savages …. But a time came when I … realised I was not on Marlowe's boat steaming up the Congo in Heart of Darkness*. I was one of those strange beings jumping up and down on the river bank, making horrid faces … That is when I realised that stories are not innocent.*

Chinua Achebe, Nigerian writer (1930 -2013)

Almost 70 % of Nigerians are still farmers: *Go to the villages, every corner you will find a group of young men, no school, no work, nothing. Whether we like it or not, these youth are the inheritors of the land. When they have zero education they behave wrongly.*

Allhaji Aminu Masari, former Speaker of Parliament (Interview in Punch 30.3.2013)

Contents

List of Abbreviations

AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
AVRIM	Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants
FOM	Federal Office of Migration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States (15 countries, incl. Nigeria)
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
ISS	International Social Services
JTC	Joint Technical Committee
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons
NIS	National Immigration Service
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria
VARRP	Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme
ZEMIS	Zentrales Migrationsinformationssystem

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We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to all persons who cooperated with us during this evaluation, particularly Ms Eve Amez-Droz and Ms Sonja Kyburz from IOM Berne, Ms Winnie Aideyan from IOM Lagos and Mr Andreas Broger from the Swiss Embassy Abuja, who all greatly supported in the planning, organisation and during the field mission to Nigeria.

The views expressed by the evaluators do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Federal Office for Migration or the International Office for Migration. The conclusions, recommendations and remaining errors are ours.

Dieter Zürcher and Brown Odigie

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Country Study

The present report forms part of the evaluation of the Swiss Assisted Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes mandated by the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) in 2012. It is to contribute to reaching the evaluation's objectives and providing answers to the three principal evaluation questions (see box) by presenting data and experiences from Nigeria. At the same time, this report is a document in its own right, designed to be understood by readers without the necessity to consult additional documents, including the six other country studies (Georgia, Guinea, Iraq, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Turkey) and the overall evaluation report.

Evaluation Objectives

- Determine the range and extent of outcomes of selected instruments of the Swiss return assistance for different target groups and countries of origin.
- Make an overall independent assessment of the outcomes achieved against the objectives envisaged.
- Identify key lessons and propose practical re-commendations for the optimisation and further development of Return Assistance, especially with regard to different target groups and different native countries.

Central Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and Individual Return Assistance to Nigerians promote voluntary return to Nigeria?
2. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and individual Return Assistance to Nigerians contribute to the process of social and professional reintegration of returnees and thus sustainable reintegration in Nigeria?
3. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and individual Return Assistance contribute to an improved cooperation of Swiss authorities and authorities of the country of origin?

1.2 Evaluation Methods

The first step in the evaluation process was an analysis of the reports made available by FOM and IOM on the Swiss AVRR programmes since January 2005 and reports on other countries' AVRR programmes in general and Nigeria, specifically. The desk study was followed by interviews with actors in Switzerland (IOM and FOM and Cantonal authorities) involved in the realisation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration in Nigeria. The main data collection method was through interviews with returnees from Switzerland, the local IOM office, authorities of the Nigerian Government, as well as with Nigerians who have not migrated, especially since the evaluation's term of reference highlight the necessity to present the AVRR programmes from the perspective of the persons most directly concerned, the potential returnees and the returnees themselves. This was realised through a working field visit in Nigeria by Dieter Zürcher in collaboration with the local evaluator, Brown Odigie.

Selection of returnees: A random and anonymous selection of 60 persons who returned through the country programme and 27 persons who returned through the individual programme was made by the evaluators. The IOM Office in Lagos identified and contacted these returnees and asked them for their consent to be contacted by the evaluators – either by a visit or by phone.

On very short notice before the start of the mission the evaluators received altogether 10 names of returnees who signed the IOM consent form. Two persons could not be reached by phone during the mission and one person did not show up and could also not be reached by phone. Consequently, seven returnees from the original sample list were included. In order to make good use of the mission, IOM was asked to submit additional names of returnees. Seven more returnees agreed to be interviewed bringing the total to 14.[1] Most of the additional returnees have returned relatively recently, i.e. after 2010.

The contacts with persons who have not migrated, an additional element of the evaluation, were established without prior planning by the evaluators during the field visit: The evaluators utilised every opportunity to talk to (mainly) males in their late teens and early twenties, seeking their views and opinions on migration to Europe.

Local organisations involved in AVRR and representing both authorities and civil society were also consulted, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Embassy, the British High Commission and the Austrian Embassy. The evaluation in Nigeria could not have been realised without the support of a local evaluator, Mr. Brown Odigie. He organised the meetings with the persons to be interviewed and conducted the interviews in Benin City as well as the telephone interviews with the returnees.

2 Short Presentation of the Programme

2.1 Structure, Duration, Context and Logic of the Programme

The AVRR programme for Nigeria as a country programme exists since January 2005. It was conceived for a period of two years. It was then extended on a continuous basis. The main beneficiaries are Nigerian asylum seekers who would like to return voluntarily. The country programme comprises of a counselling scheme in Switzerland (starting right in the reception centres), organising the return (including organising documents), providing reintegration support (business plan development, financial support, entrepreneurship training for a few days and medical support). Between 2005 and 2011 a total of 607 persons were reintegrated, with rapidly growing numbers in recent years. The implementation of the programme was awarded to IOM by FOM. Initially it operated with 2-years programmes and since 2008 the programme has been extended on an annual basis.

The basic purpose of the AVRR programme is to allow a self-determined return for failed asylum seekers. The counselling of the returnees and the monitoring of the reintegration shall allow for a sustainable return. The voluntary return shall present a valuable alternative to the forced return.

The persons participating in the voluntary return presently receive CHF 1,000 in cash on arrival and CHF 6,000 for the start-up project in 2-3 instalments.[2] These contributions are in kind. The assistance can be used for: a) a business project (e.g. for paying shop rents or procurement of materials and stocks), b) an education project (e.g. vocational training), and c) an individual project (financing of accommodation or specific measures for vulnerable persons).

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[1] This does not appear to be much but the reality is that due to traffic jams, physical movements in Lagos are extremely constrained. The travel time to see one returnee (the extreme case) was 6 h within the city limits of Lagos. Due to late submission of addresses an optimal routing was also hampered.

[2] Until 2010 this amount was CHF 2,000 in cash and CHF 5,000 in kind.

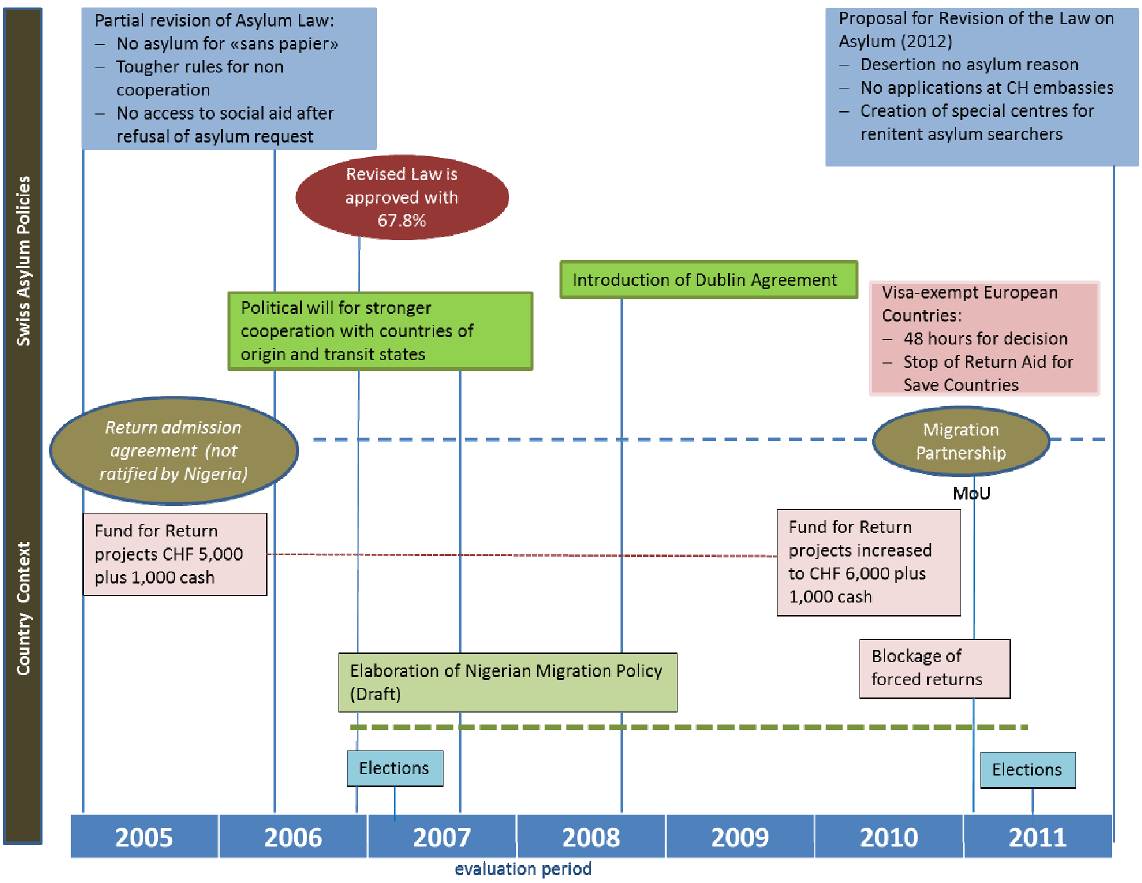
All future entrepreneurs undergo a one-week business training session offered by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).

In 2007 the monitoring was systematised with a standardised questionnaire and a planned follow-up after 6 and 12 months. But due to the fast increasing number of returnees in 2009 the number of monitoring visit has to be reduced (IOM 2011) and focused to Lagos area.

With the emergence of the "migration partnership" the Swiss AVRR programme has to be seen in a broader policy dialogue on migration issues between Switzerland and Nigeria (see below).

The following graph shows the most important context development regarding the migration pattern between Switzerland and Nigeria 2005-2011:

Figure 1: Swiss and Nigerian context development



Source: KEK-CDC; own additions regarding country context

2.2 Frame Conditions of the Relations Switzerland – Nigeria

The Swiss Federal Council signed a "return and readmission agreement" (*Rücknahmeabkommen*) with Nigeria in 2003. This agreement is yet to be ratified by the Nigerian authorities. So far, the ratification has not been possible due to political issues and other priorities. Nevertheless, the Nigerian government has applied the contents of the agreement in good faith.

In February 2009 Switzerland suggested the Nigerian authorities the concept of a "migration partnership". In April 2009 the then Swiss Foreign Minister presented a draft agreement to the Nigerian authorities when she visited Abuja. A MoU was established and on 14.2.2011 the "migration agreement" was signed between the two parties (represented by the Justice Minister of Switzerland and the Foreign Affairs Minister of Nigeria).

Since then, a Joint Technical Committee (incl. representatives of the Nigerian Diaspora, and Nigerian Embassy, etc.) meets twice a year with alternating venues (Nigeria and Switzerland). This body discusses and steers the content of the agreement which comprises: a) AVRR and structural aid, b) capacity development projects (e.g. Nestlé Nigeria, professional training at the World Trade Institute, train the trainer in agriculture, training of diplomats), c) diaspora project in the vocational area, and d) police cooperation. There is also an interdepartmental working group in Switzerland dealing with implementation of the "migration agreement".

2.3 Other Return Assistance Programmes in Nigeria

There is a diverse landscape of countries and organisations involved in AVRR and other programmes (e.g. trafficked women and children).

The UK has possibly the biggest number of cases owing to the big diaspora of presently 1 million Nigerians living there. For example, the UK has three times more visits from Nigeria than the rest of the EU. Migration is basically perceived as an asset by both countries. However, a mechanism has been put in place to manage cases of irregular migration. In 2012, 1,500 Nigerians faced a forced return and 250 returned voluntarily. In 2010, IOM lost a bidding process to operate the UK AVRR programme. The contract was given to "Refugee action UK" which selected local partners in Nigeria. However, the exercise went wrong due to alleged corruption. Following a due diligence assessment the mandate was then given to "Pro Natura International". There are four options to return from the UK: a) "early release" (from prison) provides £1,000, b) AVRIM (irregular migrants) supports return but provides no reintegration allowances, c) VARRP supports asylum seekers or failed asylum seekers who get £500 in cash and £1,500 in kind per person, and d) the AVFRP for families that has similar allowances as the AVRIM.

A cost of living survey revealed that Abuja and Lagos are among the five most expensive cities in Africa. The UK has found that the existing four instruments are not sophisticated enough to guarantee a sustainable return and is therefore presently developing two new projects. The first is earmarked for forced and voluntary returnees and offers the beneficiaries accommodation, vocational and soft skills training as well as financial support for some weeks. This project aims at a soft landing of returnees and has secured funding. The second project is to specifically promote entrepreneurial training for one month (with a capacity of 20 persons). These programmes are meant for returnees at risk.

Austria has a return and reintegration agreement with Nigeria since 2011. They have around 25 voluntary returnees per year, and the number of no shows is high. Austria has no law allowing detention anymore which has reduced the pressure to return. Forced returnees get € 50 and many try to marry out of the asylum process. The number of cases has been relatively stable in recent years (1,300-1,400, of which around 25 are voluntary returns). The strong lobbying by Austrian NGOs makes a strict implementation of the asylum procedures difficult and they do the counselling of potential returnees. Italy recently issued 13,000 Schengen Visas so that irregular migrants can move northwards and this action angered EU countries, incl. Austria. The Nigerian diaspora in Austria dates back to the Biafra war (1970s) and is still well organised.

There are other countries operating VARR programmes. Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, France and Sweden, for instance, operate an EU reintegration instrument for Nigeria and Pakistan. They offer up to € 1,250 per person or € 2,000 for start-ups. Their local partner in Nigeria is a local NGO called “Idia Renaissance”. They are stationed in Benin City and deal mainly with trafficked persons. They apply a three-phase approach: a) meet and greet, b) reintegration, and c) monitoring. Idia Renaissance has also received a few cases from Switzerland other than those through IOM (e.g. ISS, Micado).

3 Dynamic of returns

3.1 Data Overview

Table 1: Data on Nigerian asylum seekers, 2005-2011

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Total stock								
Total number of new asylum seekers [1)]	382	302	327	988	1,786	1,969	1,895	7,649
Total number of persons in the asylum process in Switzerland [1)]	753	545	409	608	797	626	790	n.a.
Number of persons with approved asylum [1)]	4	1	0	2	1	2	1	11
Departures								
Number of voluntary re-turnees [2)]	21	22	33	49	137	165	137	564
- Country Programme[3)]	5	8	2	8	4	21	40	88
- Individual Return	5	8	2	8	4	21	40	88
Third country returns [1)]	16	23	21	24	57	72	29	242
Uncontrolled departure [1)]	92	135	67	174	431	433	617	1,949
Entries into asylum process [1)]	4	10	4	5	9	25	42	99
Other exits[4)]	1	0	0	14	64	601	866	1,546
Proportions								
Number of asylum seeker to voluntary return	5.5%	7.3%	10.1%	5.0%	7.7%	8.4%	7.2%	7.4%
Number of voluntary returns to forced returns	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	1.4	0.6	0.4

[1)] *Source: Annual statistics FOM*
[2)] *http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/dam/data/migration/rueckkehr/rueckkehrfoerderung/rueko/statistik/2004-2012-stat-nation-d.pdf*
[3)] *http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/dam/data/migration/rueckkehr/rueckkehrfoerderung/rueko/statistik/2001-2012-ausreisen-lp-d.pdf*

[4)] Until 2011 incl. so-called Dublin cases
** Forced returns were blocked for several months after the death of a deportee.*

3.2 Discussion of Data

The number of asylum seekers from Nigeria has seen an early rise in 2002, when the number jumped from a few hundreds in the years before to 1,233 asylum seekers. It then decreased until 2007 when the downward trend changed again. Since then the number has continued to remain at a high level. 2012 has seen a record number of Nigerian asylum seekers (2,746).

A significant change in the number of Nigerian asylum seekers happened in fall 2008 when the number of new applications doubled from around 60-80 per month in early 2008 to 120-140 applications after October 2008. This can be attributed to the financial crisis and the fact that many Nigerians lost their jobs during that time in southern European countries (which can also be seen from the individual cases presented later). In 2012 the average number appears to have risen once again.

Both the number of Nigerian asylum seekers and the number of voluntary returns have fluctuated between years but overall increased over the years. The initial mistrust for voluntary returns – when people were not sure whether the payments would be made after the return – could be reduced because the success cases have shown that the Swiss promises are kept. Thus the proportion of voluntary returns remained largely at the same level and the number of no-shows (people who agreed to leave voluntarily but have not shown up at the airport) has remained constantly high.

The ratio of voluntary to forced return is a politically sensitive figure, also for the Nigerian authorities. Except for 2009, the number of forced returns was higher in each year but the ratio of voluntary to forced returnees has considerably improved: for each voluntary return in 2005, five Nigerian were forcibly returned, whereas in recent years this figure is almost at par.

However, this was severely affected due to the blockage of forced returns after the death of a Nigerian while being deported in 2010. The number of both forced returns and voluntary returns dropped but is expected to change after 2011. It is interesting to note that the number of forced returns and voluntary returns somewhat correlates: for example, in 2010 when forced returns were blocked, voluntary return cases also decreased. This clearly demonstrates that the perspective of forced return is aiding the decision to opt for a voluntary return.

IOM in Lagos is the organisation handling Swiss cases referred to by the FOM: Besides those of the Country Programme it also caters for most of the individual cases of voluntary returnees.

Table 1: Persons supported by IOM Lagos returning from Switzerland

Country	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**Total**
Country Programme	144	97	183	424
Individual Programme (returnees from reception centres)	1	26	36	53
Total	**145**	**123**	**219**	**477**

Switzerland has the highest number of voluntary returns at IOM Lagos as can be illustrated for the year 2012: IOM Lagos counselled and reintegrated 183 returnees from

Switzerland[3], 23 from Malta, 15 from Austria, 13 from Italy, 4 from Denmark and Canada each, and 3 from Ireland. The number from Switzerland is expected to substantially increase in 2013 since already 94 cases were taken over by end of March.

Compared with other countries the increased ratio of voluntary returnees seems relatively successful given the general resistance of Nigerians to return as a first option. Due to the time lag between the date of asylum application and voluntary return the number of voluntary returns from Switzerland is expected to increase in the coming 1-2 years and IOM has between January and March 2013 already received almost 100 cases.

There are some inconsistencies between various sources (e.g. FOM annual reports and the ZEMIS data sets).

3.3 Assessment

The perspective of detention and forced return in combination with the allowances offered by the Swiss AVRR programme has improved the acceptance of the voluntary return. The initial mistrust and high number of no-shows reduced somewhat but the proportion of voluntary returns remained below 10 % compared to all asylum seekers Yet, compared with other countries, this seems relatively successful given the resistance of Nigerians to return as a first option.

Given the minimal chances for obtaining asylum for Nigerian the shortening of the asylum procedure should remain a priority for policy adjustments.

[3] This represents 94% of the voluntary returns from Switzerland to Nigeria. The remaining returnees returned through other organisations.

4 Individual Returnees

This chapter presents six cases of all returnees that were part of the random sample and for four additional cases. They reflect the opinion of the returnees.

<table>
<tr><td>Mrs B.P., Lagos</td><td rowspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Female, 27 years</td></tr>
<tr><td>Single</td></tr>
<tr><td>Secondary school</td></tr>
<tr><td>Returned September 5, 2011</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">
Migration Trajectories

She left Nigeria in 2003 and travelled via Italy to Switzerland. She stayed in Pfäffikon. She has health problems and regularly attended the hospital for treatments. She was supported by HEKS. In 2010 she got a negative asylum decision and had discussions with the migration department. The police knocked at her door on 2.2.2011 and informed her that she has to leave. She could not send back remittances though she worked sometimes.

Motivation for assisted Return

She was shocked and agreed to sign for the voluntary return. The migration department informed her about the modalities and IOM supported. She had no other option and was worried about her health status when returning.

Reintegration

IOM was helpful and she underwent the business training of SMEDAN in Sept. 2011. She set up a shop for trading foodstuff and had the business registered. The rent was paid until December 2012 but during that period the shop was demolished due to road extension. She was not compensated and since then she is without work. She is not receiving any medical support despite the need for an abdomen operation. She has no work and no income at present and she is living on borrowing money.

Plan

First, she has to sort out her health problem before she can think of working. She insisted handing over her medical papers to us but we advised her to contact IOM.
</td></tr>
</table>

Mr D.B., Lagos **Male, 27 years** **Single** **n.a.** **Returned August, 2010**	

Migration Trajectories

He left Nigeria in early 2010 and travelled through Libya to Italy where he arrived in April. He saved some money by himself for this trip and the family did not know that he was leaving. He then continued to Switzerland and asked for asylum and stayed at the reception centre in Kreuzlingen. He was informed about the voluntary return possibility at the reception centre. He received a negative asylum decision in August and was informed of the consequences.

Motivation for assisted Return

He did not want to stay longer given the possibility of arrest at any given time. He developed the business idea of starting a cloth (boutique) shop in Lagos.

Reintegration

Upon return, IOM paid for the shop rent and stocked the shop with goods amounting to NGN 700,000 as part of the first instalment .This enabled him to commence business. He however lost contact with IOM when he misplaced his mobile phone, and also because a family member was sick for over one year which made him relocate outside Lagos. He has since returned back to Lagos, though the second instalment is yet to be paid by IOM (*note: this was withheld by IOM due to the loss of contact with him).* He shares the tiny shop with 3 friends and they have to pay NGN 450,000 or CHF 2800 per year *(note: that makes CHF 500 per square meter/year or more than the average office rent in Zurich).* He buys the T-shirts from a colleague who brings them from China. The business is o.k. but not sufficient for a decent life. He has to stay with 4 colleagues who share one room. He is trying to earn more money and thinks every night about his condition.

Plans

Reintegration was not easy because he could not fulfil the expectations of his family and friends. He is considered as a fool. Migrating is not an option anymore, only if he had proper documents and work.

Appreciation

In his opinion, the AVRR programme is a good scheme but promises should be kept (see open issue on second instalment above).

Mr B.R., Lagos/Ogun	No photo allowed
Male, 35 years	
Single	
n.a	
Returned November 16, 2011	

Migration Trajectories

He left Nigeria in 2009 but would not like to disclose details about the migration route. He arrived at the reception centre in Geneva. He received a negative asylum decision and was informed about the consequences.

Motivation for assisted Return

He opted for the AVRR programme because he did not want to be harassed by the police. He developed the business idea to set up a taxi service with motor bikes.

Reintegration

He returned on 16.11.2011 to Nigeria and he received the first bike in December and in March he received the business registration and got a second bike. In September 2012 motor bikes were banned on the streets of Lagos due to security concerns (accidents). He applied to IOM to change the business. Now he would like to go for cosmetics but this is capital intensive. He is still supposed to get the second instalment from the first business and is in negotiation with IOM but does not understand the delays. He rented the shop (from income of the sales of the bikes) but has nothing in the shelves.

Plans

He would like to commence the new business operations as soon as possible.

Appreciation

He is thankful that he was not deported and finds the AVRR programme a good scheme, recommending that the Swiss government continues with the programme.

Mr G.U., Lagos	
Male, 28 years	
Single	
n.a.	
Returned February 2, 2009	

Migration Trajectories

He left Nigeria for Italy in 2006 hoping to find a job which was impossible. He then went to Switzerland in 2007 and asked for asylum. Since he had no papers he was harassed by the police. He stayed one year and seven months in the asylum centre. He was unable to send money back home.

Motivation for assisted Return

He received a negative asylum decision in 2008 and he returned in February 2009. He trusted the voluntary return option of the Swiss authorities. There were no real alternatives to this. He planned establishing a car battery business.

Reintegration

When he returned his father was hospitalised. He took care of him until he died. As part of the IOM project he underwent training for the car battery business. In 2011 he went to IOM to get the money. He was not happy with the treatment meted to him until the Head of the IOM in Lagos intervened in the case. They informed him that the 2008 cases were closed. He was infuriated and contacted IOM Abuja. At the end, the case was resolved and he managed to get all funds. He is still operating the car battery business and it is going well.

Plans

Though the shop rent is very high and the profit margin small, he hopes he would be able to inject additional money into the business and expand its operations to make it more viable. He presently stays with a friend privately.

Mr O.G., Benin City **Male, 35 years** **Single Parent with 3 children** **College certificate holder** **Returned July 23, 2011**	

Migration Trajectories

He travelled to Italy in 2007 via invitation and sponsorship from his sister and later relocated to Switzerland in 2010 after a protracted argument with his employer over unpaid wages induced by European financial crisis. He intended to find another job upon arrival in Switzerland. On arrival, he was picked up by the police and taken to the reception centre. Whilst in Italy, he worked as a guide and was able to send some remittances for the support of his aged mother, children and siblings.

Motivation for assisted Return

He became aware of the AVRR programme through a friend who was also in the asylum centre. He eventually met the programme's officials who counselled him and explained all aspects of the programme to him. He accepted the voluntary return offer after he was told of other success stories by the counsellors. To him, there were no other good alternative options to the AVRR programme.

Reintegration

He developed a business plan, a mini palm oil processing mill that would process palm oil for local consumption. The business was set up with the AVRR money (NGN 535, 000) paid in two instalments by IOM in 2011 and 2012. IOM visited the business premises in 2011, located in a remote village in the outskirt of Benin City, Edo State. The business is going on fine, except for occasional disturbances by local government authorities demanding bribe even though the business is officially registered. He uses the proceeds from the business to support his aged mother, children and siblings. The first few days of return to the community were difficult for him as people, especially youth of his age, regarded him a failure. He is, however, finally reunited and reintegrated to the community and his colleagues now hold him in high esteem following the business success recorded so far.

Plan

He is sure of the business sustainability and plans to expand business operations if he is able to secure additional funds. He noted that the disadvantages and the associated risks of going to Europe to seek for greener pasture outweigh the advantages.

Appreciation

He is very much satisfied with the Swiss AVRR programme and he is grateful to the Swiss government for coming up with such scheme for asylum seekers.

<table>
<tr><td>Mr D.O., Lagos</td><td rowspan="5">
Mr D. behind his brother, the Principal of a college (the meeting took place at the school)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Male, 35</td></tr>
<tr><td>Single</td></tr>
<tr><td>n.a</td></tr>
<tr><td>Returned July 2011</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">
Migration Trajectories
He had no work when he was staying with his family in Owerri and he decided to leave Nigeria in December 2010. He travelled to Germany and from their over land to Switzerland and the family supported him financially for this trip. He applied for asylum upon arrival in Switzerland. His application for asylum was denied and in June 2011 he decided to come back. He was mainly informed by Nigerian colleagues about the return possibilities. He stayed at the asylum centre in Lausanne where he also met IOM staff. He had health problems and got treatments in the hospital.
Motivation for assisted Return
He was afraid that he would not get treatment when he returned but there was no other option to voluntary return. He developed a business plan of selling electrical equipment in Lagos.
Reintegration
He started the shop in late 2011 and the rent was paid for two years in advance. But due to road expansion (“right of way”) he lost the shop. He travelled back to Owerri but had no work. He has some contacts with other persons who returned voluntarily.
Plans
He tries to set up a new shop but he has no savings. He would possibly try it in Owerri. He is disappointed about his situation but is still looking forward. He claims that IOM has not paid him the second instalment (CHF 3,500) and he does not know the reason. (note: IOM is aware of the case and wants to make sure that the money is at his disposal and not being taken by others of his family members).
He thinks that most young people would like to leave for Europe in search of a better life. He has realised that it is not easy in Europe either.
Appreciation
He thinks it is a nice package and an increase of the allowance would be good.
</td></tr>
</table>

Mr C.S., Owerri	Telephone interview
Male, 28 years	
Married, after return	
Completed primary school	
Returned in 2011, February	

Migration Trajectories

He travelled to Libya over land in 2009 from where he went to Italy. He could not work and was not able to send money back. He then went to Switzerland by train. The police stopped him and he applied for asylum. He was then brought to an asylum camp.

Motivation for assisted Return

The authorities explained him the options but he did not want to leave. He was made to understand that he will end up in prison eventually and that he could avoid imprisonment only when he accepts to return voluntarily. So he decided to return back to Olu in Imo State.

Reintegration

Upon return, he restricted his movement to his family house to avoid contacts since he was considered not successful. His family was not so much a problem but he felt ashamed in front of his friends who had high expectations. This however changed after some time. He developed a business plan to set up a provision and cosmetics shop and he received above NGN 500,000. He did not participate in business training because he already had experience. He started end of 2011. The business is on-going and he thanks God for life. However, the income is hardly enough to sustain his family.

Plans

He wishes to go back to Europe after a few years but only with proper documents and money, hopefully doing business. He would advise people not to go to Europe without all necessary documents.

Appreciation

He thanked the Swiss government for the assistance and however made a case for an upward review of the monetary allowances.

Mr J.B. Lagos	No photo allowed, the interview took not place in his furniture shop
Male, 33 years	
Married	
n.a.	
Returned in 2010, October	

Migration Trajectories

He declined disclosing his migration route to Europe. He arrived in Switzerland in February 2009 and stayed in the asylum camp in Zürich. He had to undergo an operation on his leg and follow-up treatment was necessary.

Motivation for assisted Return

He received a negative asylum decision and saw how badly Nigerian citizens were treated. He wanted to avoid harassments and decided to better return with assistance.

Reintegration

He established a furniture shop. Because the business is capital intensive he partnered with other people and they operate the shop jointly. Since he has no collateral he could not get a micro-finance loan. The present income is sufficient to cater for feeding and daily living but not more. He has no accommodation of his own but rather stays with friends.

The reintegration was difficult because he felt ashamed. But he had to pull himself together and to be a man, noting that If you have no money, you do not get a woman.

Plans

He plans to further expand the business when he has saved some money. Trading with goods also seems promising. Travelling to Europe without proper documentation and reliable source of income is not an option anymore for him.

Appreciation

The programme is commendable and offered him opportunity to have a good start. The fund however is too small. Also accommodation support for the returnees, separate from the fund for business would be highly appreciated in view of the huge challenges returnees encounter upon return.

Mr. S.M. Lagos	No photo allowed
Male, 29 years	
Single	
Secondary school, he is musician and comedian	
Returned in 2011	

Migration Trajectories

He left to Italy in 2009 and wanted to work in the *Cinecitta* in Rome but he travelled without documents. He then travelled to Switzerland hoping to get a job. In summer 2009 he applied for asylum in Switzerland and he was staying at a bunker in the canton of Schwyz. He received a negative decision and realised the witchcraft documents can have in Europe. He faced a lot of stress and suffered from the negative image Nigerians have in Switzerland (not every Nigerian belongs to the mafia). He feels sad that people with good potentials and talents have no chance in Europe and that the “curse of documents” should be overcome.

Motivation for assisted Return

He wanted to return in dignity and accepted the AVRR offer. He wanted to establish a music bar but he was advised to open a normal restaurant.

Reintegration

Upon returning he changed his business plan and he opened a palm oil trading business and IOM supported him. However, he realised that this involved too much travelling and thus was too stressful for him. After one year he sold everything and now he wants to set up a bar, incl. public viewing of football matches. He says he has rented the new place for three years but that he is still sorting things out.

Plans

If the new bar succeeds he would venture into other aspects of entertainment business. He also gets some support from family members for the new business.

Appreciation

AVRR is a good idea. The first instalment should be disbursed more quickly.

Mr H.M., Lagos	No photo allowed
Male, 33 years	
Married before he left, one child (after return)	
Secondary school	
Returned June 28, 2012	

Migration Trajectories

Nigeria to him is a good land with bad leaders. He was active in politics but had to flee the country after the local elections in which he was engaged by politicians in rigging and faking election results and was wanted by the police. He travelled over land to Libya and then to Italy. He did not inform his wife of his departure. There was no means of survival in Italy and thus continued to Switzerland where he arrived in May 2011. He, of course, asked for asylum.

Motivation for assisted Return

He stayed in St. Gallen when he received a negative decision and eventually realised that there was no future for him in Switzerland and knowing that his wife was in Lagos. He planned to establish a provision shop (trading foodstuffs) upon return to Nigeria

Reintegration

He decided to move to the outskirts of Lagos because the living costs are lower in the area than in the city centre. IOM supported with the rent (NGN 200,000 for 2 years; the agent takes another NGN 80,000, so this results in a rent of CHF 150 per square meter/year). He started the business in September 2012 and his profit is around NGN 1,000 – 1,600 per day (or CHF 10) which is relatively o.k. but not sufficient to live a comfortable life with his family. He sells small packages of milk, chocolate etc. and he would like to add biscuits.

Family members and friends were expecting a lot when he returned. He told them that he was deported and that he has no money saved. He has not visited the village, a regular practice among the Igbos (though his parents are deceased) in order to avoid questions and monetary demands from family members.

Plans

He has realised that life is not better in Europe when you have no skills. He suffered from the bad image Nigerians have.

Appreciation

The AVVR helps but the support limit should be increased.

Mr S.S., Lagos	
Male, 38 years	
Married January 2013	
Secondary school	
Returned December 12, 2011	

Migration Trajectories

He left Lagos for Turkey in 1998 where he ended up selling meat in a market. In 2001 he embarked on a journey to Greece in which he narrowly missed being killed when a Greek police officer attempted shooting him. Whilst in Greece he survived by selling articles until 2004 when colleagues of his advised him to try relocating to Switzerland. He came to Switzerland and then started to deal with second hands electronic equipment/car tyres which he shipped to Nigeria to be sold by his brother on his behalf. He once shipped a used car to Nigeria but then focussed on disposed items he was collecting around Wohlen and Aarau. In November 2011 he registered to learn German in Aarau hoping to eventually find a Swiss woman who would agree to marry him. He applied for asylum in 2004 but received a negative decision. He continued to stay illegally and was on several occasions imprisoned, in each case for short periods only.

Motivation for assisted Return

As a direct consequence of the Arab spring, more foreigners came from North Africa and this made things tougher and there were risks that he might get into drug dealings to survive. In 2011 he joined colleagues who also returned voluntarily. He opted to venture into cosmetics business since his brother was already into the business back in Nigeria and quite successful.

Reintegration

He set up his cosmetics shop in May 2012 with IOM support amounting to NGN 1,070,000 from which 18 months shop rent was paid. The business is going well, especially products such as face powder and lip sticks which are in high demand. In the course of her recent visit to Nigeria, the Swiss Justice Minister visited his shop with IOM.

He suffered much trying to reintegrate after so many years abroad because he had lost his network of contacts. Expectations and pressure from his family upon his return were high but he had to tell them the plain truth of not having any money or things to share. The pressure has since abated.

Plans

He has realised that it is better to establish one's own business in Nigeria and he is advising friends and colleagues to set up businesses in Nigeria rather than trying to go to Europe where the prospects are very bad. His lessons learnt are:

- Be content with what you have
- With the challenges of having Romanians, Bulgarians etc. as migrants, unskilled Africans have no prospects in Europe and would probably end up on the streets or in prison

- It's not true that you cannot survive in Nigeria, although business conditions are very challenging.

Appreciation

The AVRR programme is good; it helps a lot in the reintegration processes. There is however a risk that returnees who are not disciplined might spend the money unwisely. The 1,000 CHF handed out at the airport is very helpful. IOM faces the challenge of having to cater for many different people of varied characters and Winnie, Head of IOM Lagos has exceptional qualities and strategies in tackling each specific situation.

Irregular migrants normally use non-real names while abroad and this can create problems with documents back home (driving licence, marriages etc.), and even for IOM. Vocational skills training should not only be an option for people ending up in prison in Switzerland, it should also be considered for Asylum seekers in Switzerland who opted to return voluntarily. It is a great advantage for the returnee in particular and the country of origin in general to return with skills. This is because not every returnee will do well in managing business.

Mr F.N., Owerri	Telephone interview
Male, 32 years	
Married before he left, two children	
Completed primary school	
Returned September 2012	

Migration Trajectories

He travelled to Libya by road and then to Italy in December 2011. He stayed one week in Italy and would not like to give the reasons for travelling to Switzerland. He did not apply for asylum in Switzerland. He heard about the risks of staying illegally and other persons told him about the AVRR programme.

Motivation for assisted Return

He was afraid to be caught and he went to the Nigerian Embassy to apply for the voluntary return. He informed his family of his intention to return and he trusted the Swiss authorities to live up to their commitment.

Reintegration

The initial business plan developed with support of IOM was marketing of car spare parts. However, upon returning he switched to selling drinks by end of 2012. He has received NGN 500,000 and the second instalment of NGN 350,000 has been delayed due to errors on the invoice. Business is good because people have to drink every day. He is making more than NGN 1,000 (CHF 6) net profit a day. The business is doing well despite unfriendly business environment in Nigeria.

Plans

He plans to expand the business once he has additional capital.

Appreciation

The Swiss AVRR programme is a good scheme and IOM try its best to address all the returnees' concerns. They have to handle different characters. This gesture from the Swiss government should be continued and he feels very happy with the support. The financial support should be increased.

Mr V.O., Benin City

Male, 31 years

Married (before leaving Nigeria) with 3 children

College Education

Returned November 13, 2012

Migration Trajectories

He travelled to Greece in 2008 from where he moved to Italy and stayed briefly before he finally left for Switzerland in April 2012. His relocation from Greece to Switzerland was due to the current financial crises which resulted in the loss of his job. Whilst in Greece, he was involved in publication (adverts) business which enabled him to send some money home to support his family. On arrival in Switzerland he was interrogated by the immigration officials and eventually sent to the asylum camp.

Motivation for assisted Return

He was not aware of the AVVR programme until he came to the asylum camp. He decided to accept the AVRR offer and return home since his expectations of gainful employment in Europe were not met. He voluntarily accepted to return home rather than rooming the streets of Europe in search of jobs that are not available. He preferred the voluntary to forced return.

Reintegration

Whilst in Switzerland, he informed his family about his intention to return home and he was well received upon arrival and also given monetary assistance at the airport in Lagos by IOM.

He initially had a business plan of distributing petroleum products but later realised it was capital intensive. He had to change the plan and settled for a mini provision shop which he later submitted to IOM Lagos for approval. So far he had not undertaken any IOM business training, but IOM promised to organise such a training in Benin City so he could more easily participate. The provision shop was established in January 2013 with support from IOM amounting to NGN 500,000. The business has been doing well but the financial start-up capital is insufficient considering that part of the money was used to pay for one year shop rent. IOM visited the business premises in late February 2013.

Plan

He has been able to successfully reintegrate with his family and community and had no regret whatsoever of returning from Switzerland. He is convinced that the business will be sustainable and hopes to be able to expand the business and become a major distributor.

Appreciation

He is very much satisfied with the AVRR program.

Mr. O.M., Lagos	Telephone interview
Male, 30 years	
Married (before leaving Nigeria) with 1 child after return	
n.a.	
Returned in December, 2011	

Migration Trajectories

He travelled to Angola in 2007 by air, then to Zambia. In 2009 he went to Spain. He had no documents and he was doing petty jobs. He could send little money back. In September 2010 he went to Switzerland because there were no job prospects in Spain due to the current economic crisis. He had no documents and he applied for asylum upon arrival in Switzerland.

Motivation for assisted Return

He was informed in the asylum camp about the options after the negative decision but his decision to return was not voluntary. He wanted to stay. He felt forced to return "voluntarily". One should stop calling it voluntary return. Going to prison without having committed a crime would have been the only option.

Reintegration

His family was not happy about the return without any savings and also his friends expected more from him. He received 1 million NGN support from IOM to start a car spare parts business. He established the shop at Oladipo market in Lagos. IOM has visited the place twice. He is doing his best to manage the business though conditions are difficult. But as an Igbo man, he will not give up.

Plan

He plans to expand the business with possibilities of even travelling to Europe legally on business transactions.

Appreciation

He commends the Swiss government for coming up with the AVRR programme but notes that the support is still relatively small compared to the challenges of setting up business and proper reintegration. He regrets not being given the opportunity to explore Switzerland. Whilst in Spain he could at least travel around.

5 Reintegration

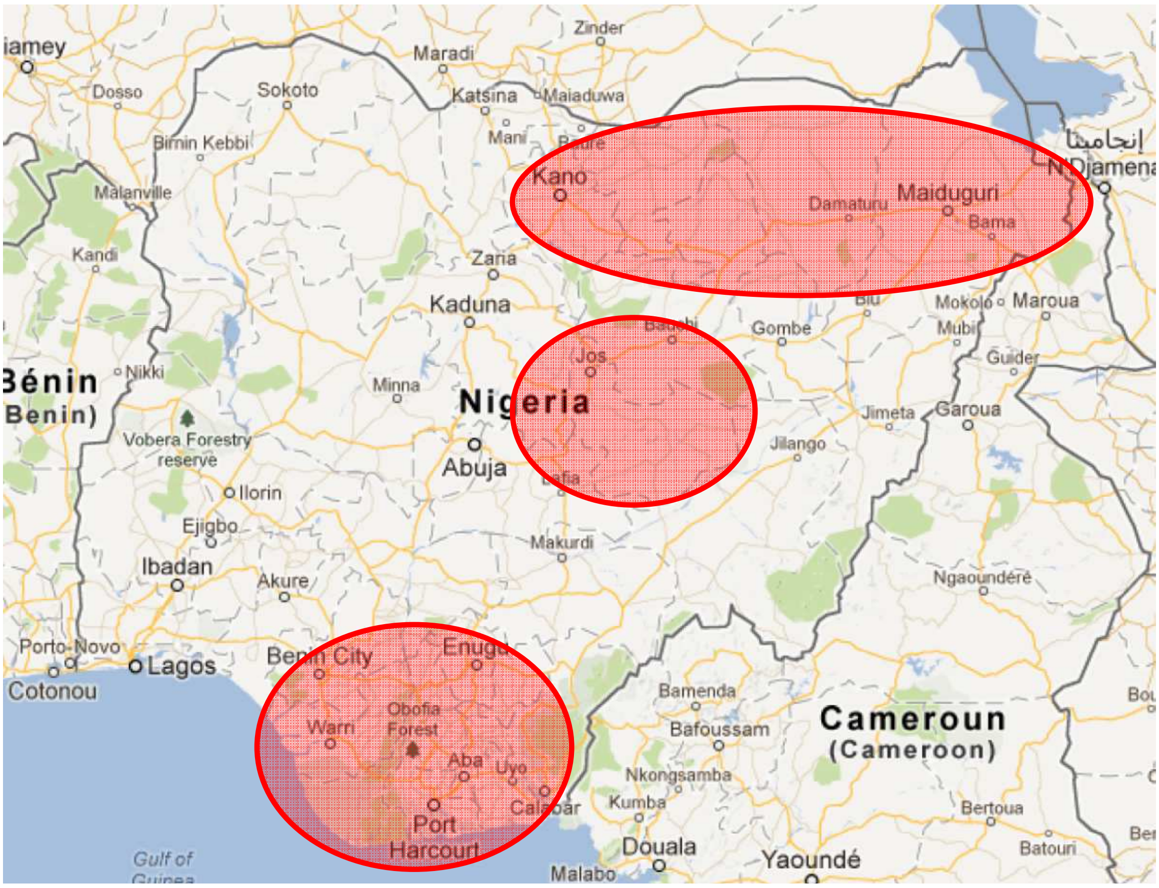
5.1 Frame Conditions for Reintegration

Socio-economic factors: Nigeria has a population of more than 160 million people and it is the most populous country in Africa. It has a population growth of over 2% per year with a projection of 390 million inhabitants in 2050. The GDP per capita doubled from US $ 1,200 per person in 2005 to an estimated US $ 2,600 per person in 2011. With the inclusion of the informal sector, it is estimated that the GDP per capita is around US $ 3,500 per person, according to Wikipedia. It is the 3rd largest economy in Africa behind South Africa and Egypt. Unemployment is around 20% and income disparities are huge. It is estimated that 68 % of the population live below the poverty line of $ 2 per day. According to the Human Development Index, an average Nigerian has only 5.2 years of schooling. Almost 100,000 students graduate from various universities in Nigeria of which more than half do not find a job (Ikuteyjo 2012).

Democratic transformation: Nigeria has made some progress in transforming to a democracy after a period of protracted military dictatorships but the progress is severely hampered by a high level of corruption and lack of education (only 60 % of the adult population is literate). The country has in recent times been faced with daunting security issues especially in the northern region. The elections of 2011 which confirmed Jonathan Goodluck as President were an improvement compared to previous elections.

Security: In general, one of the most important migration factors is internal security and the personal security of individuals. The overall security situation has deteriorated and even kidnappings for ransom of expatriates as well as for Nigerians is on the rise.

Figure 2: Map of Nigeria and its three security hot spots



Since 2009 Nigeria sees an escalation of various conflicts whose root causes go back to colonial times (or even earlier) and often a combination of ethnic[4] and religious factors and the struggle for resources. Despite the delicate security situation in several parts of Nigeria, the perspective of jobs and economic gains were the driving force of migrants. The map above shows the three deep-rooted crises regions – whose status however spills over to the whole country:

- Niger Delta: especially since the 1990s, militant pressure groups formed by ethnic minority groups (e.g. Ogoni) have engaged the Federal Government and the multi-national oil companies in a fight for a better share of the income from oil resources. The income of the oil exports is estimated at around US $ 60 billion of which more than 80% goes into financing the blown up Federal Government structures. The region is also one of the most densely populated in the world with more than 260 persons/km^2 and it grows by 3% per year!
- Middle Belt (Plateau): this is referred to as the "Jos-Crisis". This voracious conflict between mostly Christian indigenous people (e.g. the Berom) and new arriving mostly Islamic settlers moving down from the North and even Niger (Hausa/Fulani) is old but has escalated recently. The Berom are defending their indigene status and privileges and the conflict is at present spiralling with terror attacks, mass killings and suicide bombings almost on a weekly basis.
- Northeast: 12 states (out of 36) have introduced the Shari' ah law and fundamentalism among Muslims and Christians has rapidly spread. Suicide bombings and terror attacks have resulted in tremendous loss of people and property in the past few years. The Nigerian Government has not been able to effectively address the root causes. The economy is suffering (e.g. the tourism sector) with the activities of Boko Haram unabated. It is suspected that Boko Haram (thought to be a branch of Al Qaida), have started to spread their activities to other parts of the country. Recently a Boko Haram cell with prepared improvised explosives and weapons was raided in Lagos.

Migration Policy: Nigeria is a source country for migration (e.g. to Europe) as well as a transit and destination country for migrants of neighbouring states, such as Niger, Ghana, Benin republic etc. Although ECOWAS allows a regime of free movement with approved travel documents following the adoption of the Free Movement Protocol of 1979, irregular migration to Nigeria has become a problem in the face of current security challenges. The Nigerian authorities have resulted to deporting people from neighbouring states without relevant travel documents.

Remittances sent by the Nigerian diaspora are estimated at US $ 21 billion per year, many times more than official development assistance (ODA). Migration is seen as a beneficial development. An Inter-Ministerial Committee on the development of a national policy on migration was set up in 2006 and after several stakeholders meetings and reviews, the draft copy of the policy was submitted to the presidency in 2011. The policy document is still awaiting approval by the presidency. The policy stresses the triple win principle: migration should benefit the migrant and his family, the country of origin and the country of destination. This strategy aims at protecting the human, civil and economic rights of its citizens at home and abroad as well as the rights of foreigners residing in Nigeria. It also aims at eradicating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Drug routes: Nigeria is presently a transit hub for cocaine from South America to Europe. This trend results in many Nigerians/West Africans being engaged in the smuggling and dealing of drugs in Western European cities. Despite high risk, with high

[4] Nigeria has over 380 distinct ethnic groups.

income, this illegal business may discourage people to take advantage of the AVRR programme.

5.2 Assessment of the Quality of the Reintegration

A master thesis conducted among six voluntary returnees to Nigeria assisted by Switzerland assessed the satisfaction and sustainability of the reintegration programme from the perspective of the returnees: most of the interviewed returnees did not achieve a substantial improvement of their living standard (Senarclens 2010).

The responses of the returnees during this evaluation provide a more promising and accurate picture, though this might not be as successful as indicated by IOM monitoring reports. One critical factor to assess the sustainability and quality of the reintegration is when the payment of rents and support of IOM elapses. There is a clear indication that returnees that came back earlier (more than one year ago) face more challenges in sustaining their business.

Out of the seven returnees of the random sample chosen between 2008 and 2011, one is still in the original business and doing very well (outside Lagos), three are doing o.k. meaning that they survive but cannot really save income. One of them has changed the business since the start. There are finally three returnees that have lost their original businesses and have no regular income from this anymore (all in Lagos).

All of the seven additional contacts provided are more recent returns (after mid 2011): four of them were doing very well, two were o.k. and one intends switching over to another business but his real situation at the moment appeared to be confused and doubtful.

Therefore, it does appear that businesses outside of Lagos have better chances and conditions for success than those in Lagos. The business environment is hampered by the following factors:

- Very high costs of rents and up-front payment requirements of up to two years for renting business premises/shops. A recent Lagos state government law has reduced the advance payment to six months easing the situation to some extent. The enforcement of the law is doubtful given the resistance by landlords/house owners.
- Erratic power supply. Businesses depending on electricity require the operation of a generator, which in the long run, increases the operating costs of businesses.
- Despite official business registration by relevant authorities, business owners still face occasional demands for bribes by local authorities.
- Shops are usually located along roads. With road expansion projects there is a high risk of losing one’s shop to the “right of way” principle. Usually the landowners are compensated by the governments but not business owners who rent the shop. A compensation clause should be foreseen and regulated in the lease agreement.
- The barriers to accessing micro-finance facilities for AVRR returnees are very high due to unfavourable interest rates (above 20%) and lack of collaterals.
- Stiff competition: usually the market areas in Lagos aggregate many shops offering the same products (e.g. clothes, foodstuffs, cosmetics). This results in a stiff competition and very small margin. This hinders the accumulation of profits and savings for reinvestments.

The term “sustainable” return must be interpreted in a different way. The sustainability of the business is less decisive than the capability of the returnees to develop a sustainable perspective to continue his or her professional career. In this sense, all but one of the returnees are satisfied with their voluntary return and do not want to migrate to Europe again. They also spread their disappointing experiences of migration and lessons learnt among friends and colleagues.

One returnee questioned the term “voluntary”, saying it is rather ‘‘forced voluntary return’’. All returnees only opted for the voluntary return in light of the alternative options, including forced deportation or eventual police action. Thus, the AVRR scheme can only attract interest in combination with other stronger policy measures.

5.3 Effects on and Perception of non-migrant Populations

Outcomes and their correspondence to anticipated outcomes: It is slowly being realised that emigration to Europe is not an easy and promising alternative to economic problems at home, especially to those who have returned. ECOWAS, various Nigerian government agencies and some local NGOs are trying to raise awareness and sensitise the youth about wrong expectations of migration to Europe but these efforts seem not to be yielding much results considering the mass of unemployed youth in Nigeria. Most young people would like to improve their life conditions and see migration to Europe and other western countries as an opportunity to realise their dreams. Stereotypes shown on television and other media are quite persistent and also the perception that in Switzerland everybody earns something, whether employed or not, is difficult to suppress (unemployment benefit and social assistance schemes is actually true for Swiss citizens but not for people without documents).

Pull effects: FOM has assessed the pull factors of the Nigerian country programme and the return possibility from the reception centres in 2009 (IOM 2009). The internal analysis came to a negative conclusion: neither the return from the regional reception centres nor the country programme indicate any pull-effects so far. It was also concluded that only a small number of Nigerian asylum seekers decides to return voluntarily.

All persons interviewed in Switzerland denied that there is a direct pull effect for the AVRR country programme in Nigeria. The actual costs and the opportunity costs (travel time) are much higher than the return package they receive through voluntary return. Information about costs and packages for travelling to Switzerland were difficult to obtain but are estimated to be above CHF 5,000 per person for the cheapest and most arduous ones.

However, indirect pull factors that were mentioned are:

- Even after arrest and detention, irregular migrants are released from detention within a short time frame.
- When caught with drugs, the treatments are relatively mild and prison conditions are seen as good enough (with vocational training and subsistence allowance).
- Low level of unemployment and relatively good labour market and job prospects (provided the stay is regularised).

Comparison with reintegration successes of other countries' programmes: compared to the other countries (incl. the UK) the Swiss AVRR programme is substantial in size. The approach is consolidated and is seen by other countries' authorities as a best practice model, even by Nigerian authorities.

5.4 Assessment

The return after a negative asylum decision is emotionally difficult for the returnees because they failed in meeting their expectations. The support provided by the AVRR is an important element that eases reintegration even if it is not a guarantee for business sustainability. It provides a good alternative to forced returns and allows a return in dignity – though not always truly voluntarily from their perspective.

6 Cooperation Switzerland – Nigeria

The cooperation is based on the "migration partnership" between Switzerland and Nigeria which is based on the following principles:

- A successful migration policy has to respect the rights and dignity of all people.
- A successful migration policy considers the societal, social and economic chances as well as the risks of migration (e.g. human trafficking, drug trade).
- A successful migration policy requires the participatory cooperation with other states and other actors such as international organisations, NGOs, diaspora and the private sector.
- A successful migration policy applies all available policy instruments of the internal and foreign policy sphere in a coordinated and coherent manner.

The related MoU was signed in 2011 and the implementation of the Swiss-Nigerian migration partnership is steered by a Joint Technical Committee (JTC).

6.1 Assessment by Nigerian Authorities

For the Nigerian authorities, the "migration partnership" is a good model and the regular exchange between Swiss and Nigerian authorities is a good mechanism for reviewing the status and progress. The authorities are satisfied with the progress of the AVRR component and are impressed by the success stories documented by IOM. Also the progress of other components of the agreement is commendable (e.g. vocational training with the diaspora). They are satisfied with the high number of voluntary returns. While commenting on the Swiss monetary support as relatively good, they nevertheless note that doing business in Nigeria is costly (lack of electricity and infrastructure) and this often has negative effects on profit margins and business survival.

The authorities call for more programs that would sensitise people about the real migration perspectives in Europe. People are ignorant about the skills requirement to have a chance in the labour market of Europe. This could be done by NAPTIP, local government agencies or even religions organisations. However, in the long run, to decrease irregular migration more jobs should be created in Nigeria and this can only be achieved with higher investments in human capital development, focusing especially on vocational training. But this happens only outside of Lagos if the security situation can be improved in the three hot spots.

With the current security challenges in Nigeria the control of the border has become a higher priority. There is a need for systematic checks in order to combat terrorism.

Despite several efforts it was not possible to obtain the views of the Nigerian Embassy in Berne.

6.2 Assessment by the Swiss Authorities

The cooperation runs smoothly and the “migration partnership” provides a good platform for regular dialogues. The cooperation with the authorities in Nigeria and the Nigerian Embassy in Bern are very good.

The “migration partnership” is important to have a real dialogue and not just to impose requirements determined by the Swiss interior politics to Nigeria. The discussions during the JTC meetings allow identifying joint areas of concern and understanding in terms of migration and broader socio-economic issues. The “migration partnership” allows a real “whole of Government approach” because on both side several ministries and departments are involved in the dialogue.

Besides the talks during the JCTs there are regular expert meetings taking place in order to define and discuss the modalities for the identification of returnees without documents, the voluntary/forced returns and the structural support. There are also several Nigerian delegations (represented by the National Immigration Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) invited to Switzerland every year in order to identify Nigerians without documents. This is a pre-condition to issue “laisser passer” documents for the return. Some difficulties reported are that these documents for voluntary and forced returnees are not as easily issued as in the past (FOM 2012) or that payments for returnees to be deported are asked for.

The Nigerian diaspora in Switzerland has a positive perception of the AVRR programme but is concerned about the sustainability of the project, especially in the trade business. The mixed patrolling of Swiss and Nigerian police (which takes place from time to time in a few Swiss towns) is perceived with mixed feelings by the members of the diaspora.

6.3 Basis of the Cooperation

The “migration partnership” signed though a MoU between Switzerland and Nigeria in 2011 seems to be a good platform to exchange migration policy issues and the AVRR programme in Nigeria has to be seen in the context of the whole package. However, it is too early to detect any effect or impact. Furthermore, these might be limited due to the other driving forces of migration: search for gainful employment and security. Therefore, migration patterns from Nigeria highly depend on internal developments.

6.4 Assessment

The bilateral “migration partnership” is a good platform to exchange and discuss migration policy issues between Switzerland and Nigeria that cover the interests and concerns of both sides.

The regular (and intensive) exchange is the price to be paid for an efficient handling of voluntary and forced return from Switzerland to Nigeria in the context of raising numbers of Nigerian asylum seekers.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Return

The number of voluntary returns is linked to the number of asylum seekers. Though the proportion of voluntary return has slightly increased over the years, due to better confidence in the package by the returnees, the proportion of volunteer returnees compared to the number of asylum seekers is oscillating between 5.3 and 8.6%.

The Swiss return counselling starts from day one in the reception centres, where all the options are outlined to asylum seekers. When asylum seekers are placed in the asylum camps they are again counselled on their options, incl. AVRR by Swiss authorities or mandated NGOs. Nigerians, however, are getting receptive for a voluntary return in 80-90% of the cases only if they have a negative asylum decision and when the alternative is staying illegally in Switzerland. All voluntary returnees interviewed were afraid of being harassed or arrested by the police at any time.

The counselling is seen as appropriate and the returnees consult colleagues and even check with returnees that went back before in order to make their decision.

The return dynamics does somewhat correlate between forced and voluntary return. If there are no forced returns then the number of voluntary returns has also decreased (in 2010).

Trust and confidence building are an important element in the process. Returnees only open up to counselling and become receptive of the programme when they have trust in the processes. This very much depends on the attitudes and professionalism of the counselling persons (authorities or NGO staff).

The Swiss AVRR programme for Nigeria combines a cash payment of CHF 1,000 and in-kind assistance of up to CHF 6,000. The development of the business plan is done in close coordination between the counselling persons, potential returnees, IOM Lagos and the FOM. It appears that the development of a business plan in Switzerland is difficult, considering that the returnees have been away and out of touch with the real business environment in Nigeria. So, many have to change the plan after the return. The high number of trade businesses established in an already stiff and competitive environment reduces the chances for sustainable business operation.

The level of incentives appears to be low considering the high living costs in Nigeria in general and in the bigger cities especially, which is among the highest in Africa and almost reaching European standards. Either the first cash payment or the amount for the business / individual project should be increased.

Both, the number of asylum seekers and the number of voluntary return cannot be linked to measures taken on the Swiss side (e.g. changes in the incentives) or the bilateral “migration partnership”. The dynamics is mainly coined by the migration pressure in Nigeria (due to high unemployment, wrong expectations about the labour market situation in Europe by the mostly badly educated migrants, the critical security situation in Nigeria and due to the loss of employment in Southern Europe as a result of the financial crisis). Similarly, the “migration partnership” could not reduce the numbers of Nigerian migrants because it can only selectively address the root causes of migration. However, it has intensified and improved the bilateral dialogue on migration issues.

The present counselling in the reception centres and the asylum camps is intensive and adequate. The potential Nigerian returnees mainly become receptive for AVRR once a negative decision is documented. The number of returnees correlates with forced returns. The perspective of forced return, a good level of trust between the counselling body and the potential returnee and the availability of documented cases of successful returns are convincing arguments in favour of opting for the AVRR programme.

The Nigerian asylum seekers primarily look for gainful employment in Switzerland but at the same time have rather low qualification profiles not matching the requirements of the Swiss labour market. Nigerian asylum seekers only become receptive for a voluntary return if the other options are the risk of being arrested (and returned forcefully).

The term “voluntary” has to be seen in relation with the other alternative of a “forced return” or going for a criminal career. Most interviewed returnees actually wanted to stay.

The actors’ landscape on the Swiss side is quite diverse since several organisations are returning persons to Nigeria (IOM, ISS, Micado, and cantons), though IOM takes care of the highest number of returnees from Switzerland.

IOM Lagos provides on-time and effective information for counselling staff in the migration departments in Switzerland and does have to cater to the diverse needs of the returnees. It appears to be understaffed given the ever increasing number of returnees.

7.2 Reintegration

The reintegration packages do consider the interests of the returnees. However, not every returnee can do well as an entrepreneur after three days entrepreneurship training. Some returnees have skipped the business training because they already had past experience. This can be attributed to the fact that many returnees are of Ibo extractions with a tradition of trading expertise and being very mobile and flexible.

Accommodation appears to be a problem for many returnees. Also, provision of skills and/or vocational training to improve employability could be another component of the AVRR programme, considering the risks involved in establishing start-ups business both in Nigeria as elsewhere. However, the returnees’ concerns are how to access the funds in the quickest way and are rather reluctant to invest in vocational training (except one none of the interviewed returnees subscribed to a vocational training and skill acquisition programme).

IOM had to reduce the intensity of monitoring due to logistical reasons, security issues in certain regions of Nigeria and due to a lack of resources. There is a clear trade-off between the desire to continue long-term monitoring and the associated costs of carrying out long-term monitoring. Given the massive traffic problems in Lagos, monitoring is both time and resource consuming. If the long-term monitoring costs start to be in the magnitude of the support package, the value added is questionable. On the other side the litmus test for trade businesses comes after the IOM support for rent runs out and this is usually 12-14 months after the start, when actually monitoring is not being conducted anymore.

Therefore, it is not surprising the success rates shown by IOM’s monitoring efforts (which shows 92% success rate) cannot be confirmed by the 14 interviews conducted during this evaluation. The rate is significantly lower after one year.

The one week business training provided by SMEDAN is helpful but there is no follow-up support or coaching provided for the business people. IOM has no specific competence in doing this and therefore the professional networking and follow-up support of returnees should be explored.

The Swiss AVRR programme in Nigeria is well recognised by local and other country representatives and can be considered as best practice among various European countries (number of voluntary returns, offered support level, counselling).

The package offered by the Swiss AVRR is highly appreciated by the beneficiaries to facilitate their reintegration. It is seen as a best practice model by Nigerian authorities and allows a return in dignity. The criteria of “sustainable” return should not be linked to the immediate business established but to the future perspective of the returnee. The reintegration package is designed in close consultation with the returnee. The development or validation of a business plan after the return would allow for more realistic assessments of the local business environment but this is often hampered by the returnees’ attitude to immediately demand for the money (in-kind support) upon return. Unfortunately, vocational skill acquisition support has not been in demand by the returnees.

Not every returnee is a born entrepreneur, yet Nigerian returnees prefer to go for the money in order to set up a business (in 70% of the cases this is a trade business). There should be more diversified and attractive offers to increase the self- employability of returnees.

The conception of business ideas in Switzerland is important as mental preparation but due to the disconnection of the potential returnees from the local context it is difficult to plan realistic reintegration projects already in Switzerland. This can only be done based on market surveys in the place of reintegration.

There is a risk similar to vocational skills programmes: the risk of producing too many of the same sorts (e.g. presently cosmetics shops). This can lead to a stiff competition and little prospects to expand small businesses unless the returnee finds a niche.

All returnees have learnt their lessons about staying in Europe without documents and strife for a business career in Nigeria. Most of them believe in their ability to sustain the reintegration support of the AVRR programme, although not always with the original business idea.

The limited scope of the Swiss AVRR programme does not allow addressing structural impediments to doing business in the Nigerian context, though these are highly decisive factors of success for the returnees.

8 Recommendations

8.1 Preconditions and their Shaping

- Continue to implement the AVRR programme as a pillar within the Swiss-Nigerian “migration partnership” since the AVRR programme is well perceived by the Nigerian authorities

- The information for returnees should especially target and convince persons who have a negative asylum decision, because earlier the potential returnees from Nigeria are not very receptive

- Provide time to validate or develop the business idea just after return in order to have a more realistic business proposal (having in mind business type, location, costs, etc.).

- Given the marginal chance of obtaining asylum in Switzerland FOM should consider whether for Nigeria the newly introduced 48-hours procedure applied for Eastern European countries since August 2012 could be a model to achieve better and faster decisions.

8.2 Incentives for Return

- Use, to the extent possible, IOM Lagos’ resources to gain trust between the counselling bodies and the potential returnees and to inform interested returnees about possible business potentials (e.g. through Skype sessions). The returnees should be given 3-4 weeks to further evaluate their business idea back in Nigeria before they actually invest.

- The present Swiss support can be considered generous compared with other countries. However, it does still not allow investing into a real business which would need substantially higher grants due the high costs in Nigerian cities. However, increasing the grant for business projects should be linked with a micro-credit facility in order to be linked to a clear business (and possibly re-payment) potential. But any such differentiation of support would undercut the principle of equality unless it can be provided by a local business development agency based on specific conditions and contracts.

8.3 Realisation of Return

- Given the high living cost in Lagos, returnees should be encouraged to go back to their place of origin (which is tried by IOM but often denied by returnees for various reasons) or other urban areas. It appears that chances of business survival are slightly better there than in Lagos where competition is stiff and cost of rent extremely high.

- Loss of shop due to road expansions should be avoided or any such loss should be compensated by landowners. This should be taken care of when approving land/shop lease agreements by IOM.

8.4 Implementation of Reintegration Assistance

- Since not all potential returnees are entrepreneurs, the Swiss AVRR programme should offer and promote skill/vocational development components as an alternative (e.g. by offering 2-3 months training in farming, electrical wiring, auto mechanics, hairdressing, catering, fish farming, soap/beads making, fabrication, carpentry etc.). This would have to be combined with a start-up fund since the opportunity for gaining employment in the formal labour market after training is minimal.

- In the “migration partnership” policy dialogue, mobilisation of local resources for the continued support/expansion of successful businesses should be strengthened (incl. coaching of relatively successful entrepreneurs).

- The need for awareness raising among young Nigerians is – despite many efforts by various local and international agencies – still high. It takes a long and continuous effort to inform Nigerian youth about the realistic perspectives and risks while migrating.

8.5 Follow-up of Reintegration

- Given the high cost implications (time), full coverage monitoring is not feasible in Nigeria. In order to track returnees/businesses, which provide important case studies or lessons learnt to convince people for a voluntary return, incentives could be offered if people report about their status after 1, 2 or 3 years (when they might be in Lagos anyway).

- IOM should be encouraged by FOM to report realistically on longer term reintegration chances in order to enable mutual learning and thereby improving the reintegration chances of future returnees.

- The professional counselling of the returned persons should be maintained or even improved, possibly by professional expertise in business development that could also link successful entrepreneurs to micro-credit organisations.

- The constraining factors faced by returnees doing business in Nigeria should be constantly discussed during the migration policy dialogue (e.g. JTCs) and bilateral consultations (e.g. expert missions) with Nigerian authorities.

Persons interviewed in Switzerland and in Nigeria

Switzerland

- Mr. Markus Reisle, Global Programme Migration, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Mr. Roger Zurflüh, Technical Specialist Return Western Africa, FOM
- Ms. Katharina Schnöring, Mrs. Eve Amez-Droz and Mrs. Sonja Kyburz, IOM Office Bern
- Mr. Stefan Imbimbo, Migration Department, Canton of St. Gallen
- Mr. Remi Alao, Bern, member of NIDOE, a Nigerian Diaspora organization

An interview with the Nigerian Embassy did not materialise despite several attempts and an interview date.

Nigeria General

- Mr. Tom Adams, 1st Political Secretary, Migration, British High Commission, Abuja
- Mr. Andreas Broger, Migration Adviser, Embassy of Switzerland, Abuja
- Mr. David Chukwudi, development worker who studied abroad
- Mr. Dankano, Director Consular and Immigration Services Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
- Mr. Femi Fasunloro, Self Help Development Facilitators (SEDFA), Lagos (partner of the ECOWAS-Spain Fund on migration and development)
- Mr. Roberto Lang, Stagiaire, Embassy of Switzerland, Abuja
- Ms. Osas Elizabeth Ito, Project Officer, Idia Renaissance, NGO in Benin City, Edo state
- Mr. Jonathan Nwoke, Principal, S&E college, Lagos
- Mr. Ado Rieger, Migration Adviser, Austrian Embassy, Abuja
- Mr. Brown Odigie, Programme Officer, Migration, ECOWAS-Spain Fund on Migration and Development, Directorate of Free Movement of Persons, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja
- Ms. Yvonne Onabolu (Project Officer Migration Policy), British High Commission, Abuja
- Rev. Akuko Success, Pastor in Lagos
- Mr. Stefan Veit, Dy. Head of Mission, Austrian Embassy, Abuja
- Ms. Winnie Aideyan, Head of Office, IOM Lagos
- Ms. Manuela, Monitoring Assistant, IOM Lagos

Nigeria Returnees

- 7 returnees from the random sampling
- 7 additional returnees

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Assisted Voluntary Return to Nigeria (2009), Report on Cases 2005-2009

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration from Switzerland to Nigeria (2008), Project document

Monitoringbericht 2011, Rückkehrhilfeprogramm Nigeria

Websites

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http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria.aspx

Human Development Index:
http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/NGA.pdf

International Social Services:
http://www.reintegrationproject.ch/en/the-success/results.html

FOM
http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/dam/data/migration/statistik/asylsta§tistik/jahr/

Economy:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Nigeria